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Spring 1937

# Kentucky Warbler (Vol. 13, no. 2)

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## Recommended Citation

Kentucky Library Research Collections, "Kentucky Warbler (Vol. 13, no. 2)" (1937). *Kentucky Warbler*. Paper 50.  
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# The Kentucky Warbler

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Volume XIII

SPRING, 1937

No. 2

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## SPRING MEETING

The fifteenth annual spring meeting of the K. O. S., held on April 15-16, 1937, at the Seelbach Hotel, Louisville, Ky., began auspiciously with a large attendance. Our president, Mr. Bacon, after his welcome, introduced Robert M. Mengel, a young Louisville bird student, who told of his recent trip to Florida and of the many species of birds which he saw there. He illustrated his talk with free-hand drawings in color upon a blackboard. The audience was happy indeed to know that so able and intelligent a young man, who has already advanced far in bird study, is counted among our active members.

Mr. Albert F. Ganier, of Nashville, editor of THE MIGRANT, and staunch friend of the K. O. S., spoke of variation among birds, telling of different kinds of legs, wings, bills, feet and talons among different species, giving the purposes of these variations and explaining how structure is adapted to use. He spoke of different types of sound, of various kinds of nests, of textures and shapes of eggs, showing in each case the importance of adaptability. In conclusion Mr. Ganier urged a continuance of bird study, not only for the immediate pleasure to be gained but because in later years the association with the birds, the fields and woods brings about a sense of rejuvenation, calling back memories of earlier days and giving something extremely worthwhile to live for and to enjoy.

Mr. Raymond J. Fleetwood, junior biologist of the Soil Conservation Service at Paducah, Ky., spoke of the work of that service in improving the environment for wild life in Kentucky. Among the reasons for reducing wild life population he gave the clearance of shrubbery, briars, and trees from farm land, and the grazing of cattle in the woodlands. Wild life conservation, which includes vegetation and plant life as well as animal and bird life, he stated, is a complex subject which demands much study. A knowledge of the relation of one form of life to another, of the reasons for a decrease of one form of life, is necessary. He told of the work of molding by proper education the attitude of the people to-

ward the creatures of the forests and streams so that there may again be an abundance of birds and other animal life.

Mr. Ganier then concluded the afternoon's program by showing lantern slides of many species of birds, their nests and habitats, including the Great Horned Owl, Golden Eagle, King Rail, Cliff Swallows, Mississippi Kite, Least Tern, American Egret, Anhinga, Cormorant, and closed with a beautiful colored picture of hundreds of ducks rising in the early morning from a wooded lake on a bird refuge in Arkansas.

After the meeting Miss Emilie Yunker showed the bird houses and feeding stations made by pupils of the Louisville public schools and distributed bird sticks, carved and beautifully colored by pupils in the schools.

On Friday morning sixteen early risers assembled at seven o'clock for a field trip led by Mrs. Dorothy M. Hobson to the ponds and woods in Indian Hills, out the River Road to the Scout Camp and Sleepy Hollow. A total of seventy species was seen, the most unusual for those who usually cover the territory being an Osprey, soaring majestically with gracefully curved wings, and a flock of Tree Swallows. An American Bittern and two Sora Rails were discovered among the cat-tails, several species of ducks were found on the river, a few warblers had arrived for the late spring, and many of our winter residents were still at hand. The group would have enjoyed spending the entire day together in the field, but the luncheon necessitated hastening back toward town.

Forty members attended the luncheon at the hotel at twelve thirty. Dr. T. Atchison Frazer, with the subject, "Random Shots," told of many interesting observations he had made during his recent studies: a Cowbird shot in Kentucky in midwinter which had been banded in Texas in July; the interest of a Cowbird in the incubation of her egg which she had laid in a Phoebe's nest; the discovery of a false bottom in a Yellow Warbler's nest in which had been laid a Cowbird's egg; observations on the feeding of young Carolina Wrens; the possession by Starlings of Blue bird cavities and Woodpecker holes; and many other interesting and entertaining facts.

Mr. S. E. Perkins III announced the meeting of the Wilson Ornithological Club in Indianapolis in December, inviting as many as possible from Kentucky to attend. Mr. Bacon paid tribute to Miss Emile Yunker for her many years of faithful service to the K. O. S. and thanked her for the exquisite flowers which decorated the tables.

The afternoon session opened with Mr. Perkins, treasurer of the Wilson Ornithological Club, as the first speaker. He described the unusual Great Blue Heronry in Starke County, Indiana, and illustrated his talk with colored lantern slides depicting the flowers, shrubs, trees, animals and birds of the forest in great profusion. The Great Blue Heron nests and the many birds in the tamarack trees were of special interest. The lantern slides were followed with moving pictures of these majestic birds in their nesting territory.

Dr. Gordon Wilson told of his bird experiences since 1931 over many parts of the country. He spoke of the new birds he added to his list each year and where they had been found and told of the pleasure of re-encountering the same birds in far different localities at different times of the year. He spoke of the absorbing interest in learning each year new facts about old friends, reminding us that all these experiences even though seemingly trivial in themselves, when accumulated ultimately make up a life experience.

Dr. Rodney D. Book, of Corning, Ohio, spoke of many points of behavior in the Ti'mouse, which he has studied closely for twenty five years. Their behavior when feeding, mating, behavior of the young, his identification of individuals by singular characteristics, and several problems regarding these friendly birds to which he has found no solution, formed a delightfully interesting talk.

Dr. Wilson thanked the visiting speakers,—Mr. Ganier, Mr. Perkins, Dr. Book, Mr. Fleetwood—for their kindness in having come to Louisville to take part in the program and expressed to the neighboring organizations our appreciation of their interest. With sincerest gratitude in the heart of each of us to every speaker during the two days' session for the illuminating facts that were given, their entertaining presentation, the encouragement and added stimulus to continued study and observation, the fifteenth annual spring meeting was brought to a close.

—EVELYN J. SCHNEIDER,  
Louisville, Ky.

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## BIRDS OF KENTUCKY

By

Brasher Collins Bacon and Burt Beavelle Monroe

### 5. WHITE PELICAN, *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos* (125)

The very few authentic records which we have been able to gather on this species indicate that it is a very rare transient in Kentucky.

#### RECORDS:

"Found on the Ohio River at Louisville and abundant at Henderson" (Audubon). Fulton County: "It is not rare during the migration season, and is occasionally noted during the winter. A few are said to winter regularly at a small lake in Missouri just across the river from Hickman. On May 10, 1887, one was captured on the Mississippi River near Hickman and brought to me for identification. I know of no other instance of its occurrence in the summer, nor any evidence of its breeding in this locality. This bird had probably been crippled during its migration" (Pindar). Reelfoot Lake: "A rare transient species; the line of migration from its breeding grounds in the northwest to its winter home on the Gulf Coast lies considerably west of the Mississippi Valley. It sometimes appears as early as late August on the Mississippi. One taken in

the fall of 1918 on the lake was mounted by Mr. Seth Curlin, of Hickman, and shown to the author at the Walnut Log Lodge. On October 3, 1926, two, which had been on the lake for approximately a month, were shot by a gunner. One of these were mounted and is now in the state Museum at Nashville. Steve Crossley who had been a hunter here for years, stated in 1919 that he had seen one or two on the lake nearly every season. Further south along the river, they have in times past been recorded as occurring in large flocks. A recent record of a flock of sixty-four, seen on September 18, 1934, near Memphis, has been made by Mr. and Mrs. B. B. Coffee" (Ganier).

6. DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT, *Phalacrocorax auritus* (120).

A fairly regular migrant in Kentucky and as this species has been found nesting in "Cranetown" at Reelfoot Lake, and in Henderson County and near Barlow, it is quite probable that they may nest frequently in the swamps and along the rivers of western Kentucky.

RECORDS:

Fulton County: "A common migrant, a fairly common summer habi- tant, and rare in winter" (Pindar). "Regular migrant may breed in the state" (Funkhouser). Lexington: "October 9, 1919" (A. Roark); Ballard County (W. A. Anderson); Nelson County: "A rare migrant; Bardstown, one record; an imma'ture bird shot from a flock of seven on September 30, 1916, by a local hunter. I am unable to state to which geographical race this specimen is referable" (Blincoe); Reelfoot Lake: "A common per- manent resident but much more abundant in early spring and fall. One of the most characteristic birds of the lake and since it keeps to the open water, is large and conspicuous, the 'Nigger Goose' always makes an im- pression on visitors. During April and May thousands of these birds con- gregate on the lake, but most of them pass on to the northwest and Canada, and only about two hundred pairs remain to breed. Up to a few years ago these were divided into two colonies, one at the head of the lake just south of the Kentucky line and the other at the head of Big Ronaldson Slough four miles northwest of Samburg. Their nesting is now confined to the latter colony where they share a 'Cranetown' with Herons, Egrets and Water Turkeys. The first mentioned colony was visited on April 26, 1919, at which time there were approximately seventy-five nests of the Cormorant with one hundred twenty-five nests of Ward's Heron, all averaging from eighty to more than a hundred feet up in aged cypress trees. The 'Cranetown' at the southwest side of the lake was last visited on May 25, 1931, at which time there were about fifty nests of the Coromorants with five times as many of the Wards's Heron. A visit here eleven years later, May 29, 1932, showed a greatly augmented population, there being estimated to be two hundred Coromorant nests in the colony" (Ganier). Bowling Green: "I have only two records, three on May 2, 1927, and one on May 8, 1935, on the McElroy Lake" (Gordon Wilson). Jefferson County: "I have seen these birds on the Ohio River especially near the vicinity of Goose Island, in November in rather large numbers.

During the fall of 1935, I saw as many as two hundred at one time resting on the water and in the trees" (Monroe). "Also recorded near Goose Island on April 22, 23, 1933; Indian Hills Pond, September 22, 1933, four birds. Ohio River at the west end of Louisville, November 13, 1933, ten birds; November 15, 1933, seven birds" (Carpenter & Monroe). Henderson County: "On June 16, 1936, in company with Mr. Daniel H. Jazen, Regional Director, Game Management Division, U. S. Biological Survey, we visited a Heron Rookery in Henderson County, located 12 miles west of Henderson, and two miles east of the head of Diamond Island, on the Ohio River. Here we found three nests each of Double-crested Cormorant and American Egrets and two hundred nests of Ward's (Great Blue) Heron, nearly all of the nests had young birds. The nests were placed in pecan, maple, oak and gum trees about sixty feet from the ground. I also visited a rookery near Barlow, on the Mounds City, Ill., road located east at Ax lake, between the lake and the bluffs. In this colony were three nests of the Double-crested Cormorant and two of the American Egrets and about three hundred nests of Ward's (Great Blue) Heron, the majority of which were placed in cupelo gum trees" (R. C. Soaper, U. S. Game Management Agent). Hopkins County: "A very rare transient. Pond River, one killed by hunters October 7, 1907, one observed October 1, 1922, one August 27, 1925, two September 21, 1928; Atkinson Lake, one bird observed on October 29, 1929; Spring Lake Refuge, one bird observed September 28, 1930, one bird stayed on the lake from October 9 to 13, 1931, one bird observed on October 5, 1932" (Bacon).

7. WATER TURKEY, *Anhinga anhinga* (118).

Due to its retiring nature and secretive habits, this species is probably overlooked in localities in the state where it doubtless occurs. It is very doubtful if they nest in Kentucky although they have been found nesting near Big Ronaldson Slough a few miles south of the Kentucky State line.

RECORDS:

Fulton County: "Abundant in the spring and fall, common in the summer, and rare through the winter" (Pindar). "It is a rare visitant" (Funkhouser). "I found it near Wickliffe, Ballard County, August 28, 1927; Calloway County, probably a rare summer resident" (Gordon Wilson). Reelfoot Lake: "During a number of trips to Reelfoot Lake in the past, this species has not been seen in summer; also it was thought the lake was beyond the northern limits of its range. However on May 29, 1932, at least fifty pair were found nesting in the 'Cranetown' at the north end of Big Ronaldson Slough. The nests very much resemble those of the Cormorants, being substantially built up of cypress twigs and snugly lined with shreds of cypress bark. In most of them four or five eggs were noted, no young having hatched as yet" (Ganier). Hopkins County: "A very rare transient. I have never observed them on the lakes; they seem to prefer the deep recesses of the big woods along the creeks and rivers. Clear Creek, one bird seen July 7, 1908; Pond River, near Green River, three birds on July 18, 1912; Pond Creek, three birds on August 22, 1917; Clear Creek, one bird November 11, 1924; Clear Creek, one bird September 2, 1925; Pond River, two birds October 14, 1928; one bird September 2, 1932 (Bacon).

## OBSERVATIONS IN FLORIDA

It was my good fortune this February to spend two weeks in Florida. The place visited was Nokomis, a small town south of Sarasota on the West Coast. The region is ideal, both ornithologically and otherwise. Ninety-six species were recorded and I must confess that little hard work was done. Single lists often numbered forty-eight species and four thousand or more individuals. Interesting birds seen were the Florida Sandhill Crane, Audubon's Caracara, Royal Tern, Brown Pelican, Cabot's Tern, Piping Plover, Snowy Egret, Ward's Heron, Louisiana Heron, and many others. Bald Eagle were common, as many as eight being seen in a day. Two nests of the Eagle were found. On one was a Great Horned Owl and on the other the Eagles. The latter nest contained two three quarter grown fledgelings of which I got good photographs.

Speaking of photography, it nearly ruined me in several ways! Financially, and in disposition. After stalking a Heron for hours through slush and mud and rattlesnake-infested palmetto it is extremely irksome to have him fly away just as the exposure is about to be made, which always happened. Other birds photographed were Florida Cormorants, Logger Head Shrikes, Bald Eagles, Common Loons, Gulls, and Vultures.

One experience which I remember very well was a trip made to the swamps of the Myakha River which runs about fifteen miles back from the Coast. The jungles and hammocks following this stream are extremely beautiful in their tropical vegetation, moss, and bird-life. Snakes, too, were very abundant there. Interesting features were the great numbers of wintering Robins, the many Shrikes, and Florida Barred Owls. The Florida Pileated Woodpecker is also found there, but I was unable to find it.

Many other birds, sights, and experiences I lack the room to record. However, it is only beginning to do justice to the State of Florida to say that it is an Ornithologist's Paradise.

—ROBERT M. MENGEL,  
Louisville, Ky.

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**BANDED REDPOLL IS FOUND: OSCAR BRYENS GIVEN  
A THRILL**

Oscar McKinley Bryens, one of Michigan's most active and accurate bird banders, and a member of the Kentucky Ornithological Society, has just received a thrill such as comes only once or twice in the life of a bird bander. It all came in a notice from F. C. Lincoln, of the United States Bureau of Biological Survey which informed Bryens that "Redpoll No. 1-48334 had been found by Miss Louise Damagalla in Pine County, Minn., on April 8, 1936." Added to this was the note: "As far as I can find, this is the first return and recovery of the Redpoll."

Bryens, who lives at MacMillan, near Newberry, had put a little numbered band on the leg of that Redpoll on April 18, 1934. He never

saw the bird again. It might have perished in its arctic nesting grounds, for all he knew. And then, just a few days ago came this notice from Washington. Bryens looked through his careful file-index of banded birds. And there he found the record—a bird banded two years before! The first time that a banded Redpoll had ever been recaptured away from the original banding station!

During the same season that Bryens banded the Redpoll, he had banded another bird in the same flock, which came back to the Bryens station two years later.

"It is of interest to see how far apart they wintered, two years after being taken in the same locality," he comments. By banding birds as a hobby, Bryens is helping to gather information about the movements of our song birds, and other data which add to the sum of human knowledge. Bryens first began banding in 1924, but not until 1930 did he catch his first Redpoll. Since then he has placed bands on 249 of these birds which come into Michigan during the winter. The little Redpoll is a cheery, fluffy, pretty little bird which summers in Arctic America, but leaves with the first advent of autumn. It is streaked below and red capped. The males have a rosy or pinkish breasts.

Bryens reports the first one to arrive on October 15 and the last one to leave on May 10. They feed chiefly on weed seeds that project above the snow and also seeds of birch and cone-bearing trees. Some years these birds may come as far south as Detroit. This year, none have been reported, perhaps due to the mildness of the winter.

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#### LOUISVILLE MEMBER HONORED

At the fifteenth annual meeting of the Inland Bird Banding Association held at the Chicago Academy of Sciences, Chicago, Illinois, November 28, 1936, Mrs. Dorothy M. Hobson, 1155 Dove Road, Louisville, Kentucky, was elected Bird Banding Councilor for Kentucky.

Each of the twenty-three States and Provinces in the Inland Bird Banding Association is represented with a Councilor excepting Nebraska.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: Mrs. Hobson is a member of both the K. O. S. and the C. W. Beckham Bird Club of Louisville. She has done excellent work in her bird banding and her articles will appear in the "Kentucky Warbler" from time to time.]

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#### JOHN JAMES AUDUBON IN HENDERSON, KY.

By Susan Starling Towles

What William Penn is to Philadelphia, John James Audubon is to Henderson, Kentucky, the old Transylvanian town, rich in traditions of



its pioneers, its heroes of many wars, and its old planter ideas that valued a town, as did the Greeks, according to the quality of its people, rather than their number.

Of all of its honored ones the "American Woodsman" is the best remembered. His name is all about the town, being given to a park, a church, a school, a street, a tourist's camping ground. The name may be seen on milk and ice wagons, and many humble enterprises bear it. Audubon coffee and cigars are offered for sale. An important enlargement east of the town, and near to his old refuge at Dr. Adam Rankin's farm, "Meadow Brook," is called "Audubon."

At Henderson is the mother Audubon Society of the State. The schools keep his birthday; annually the children write papers about him and take pride in the onetime citizenship that is so valuable an artistic and inspirational asset of their community. Here and there through the county, families hold as a precious possession a set of his BIRDS AND QUADREPEDS, a print from his folio edition, or a drawing of manuscript—perhaps a few nails from the ruins of his old mill. Many are the stories and traditions of his life here, and when the great beech on which he had inscribed in delicate letters, "J. J. Audubon, 1814," had to be cut down, it was a small tragedy.

And so Henderson is happy in having a world-honored hero. For him she hopes to make a shrine that it may be a sort of Mecca to all bird lovers and the safe place for Audubonians.

(To that shrine, the members of the Kentucky Ornithological Society will travel in October, 1937, for its Annual Fall Meeting. The announcement that this meeting would be held in Henderson was greeted with great enthusiasm. No other place in the State of Kentucky could be more appropriate for the gathering and we are taking this opportunity of inviting all members and all friends of the Society to gather with us in this Mecca in the Fall. Make your plans now.)

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### THE KENTUCKY ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Organized April, 1923

President.....Mr. Brasher C. Bacon, Madisonville, Ky.  
 Vice-President.....Dr. Gordon Wilson, Bowling Green, Ky.  
 Secretary-Treasurer—Miss Evelyn Schneider, 2207 Alta Ave., Louisville, Ky.

Meets annually in Louisville during the week of the Kentucky Education Association; in the fall at some town or park in the state.

Dues: Active, \$1.00; Group (of ten or more children under sixteen years of age), 25c a person.

Address correspondence about the WARBLER to Burt L. Monroe, 207 No. Birchwood Ave., Louisville, Ky. Send dues to the Secretary-Treasurer.